



The

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 2014

Dear Residents and Stakeholders:

Public safety is a quality-of-life issue which I have made one of my top priorities. With rising crime rates being one of the toughest challenges facing urban communities today, it is my pleasure to report that the City of East Orange has experienced the highest reduction in crime among cities of similar size in the last 10 years than any other city in the entire nation.

At a nearly 80% reduction in crime, and with more than 30% less crime per capita than neighboring municipalities, the statistics are astronomical. Our crime rate has not been this low in almost 50 years. In the first half of 2014, there was a 5% reduction in all serious crime. In the past year, the City experienced a 25% reduction in shooting incidents, bringing our total reduction in shooting incidents since 2003 to an astounding 88%. These ground-breaking achievements were accomplished because we aligned resources with problems to ensure crime fighting strategies are specific enough to have a significant effect on crime levels.

We've all heard the "word on the streets." People who plan to commit crimes in East Orange are often warned by their peers to do their dirt elsewhere or risk getting caught. That, my fellow residents, is a reputation of which we can all be proud. Despite these massive decreases in crime, we are still affected by a public perception that East Orange is not safe. I understand the negative impact that this has on our local economy, and I am working diligently to turn it around.

Now is the time to create a genuine sense of community — a place where you, your families, and everyone else who wants to do business here, FEELS safe.

As your Mayor, I will continue to take a hard stance on crime and support our East Orange Police Department's efforts to restore an overall sense of safety and well-being in every corner of our City.

Enhancing our police presence and increasing foot patrols in main business corridors has helped to build relationships and breed familiarity between police officers and the rest of the community. Using our new in-house community grid system, every single street in East Orange is visited by a patrol officer at least six times per day. Under my administration's leadership, 31 officers have received certification training in the use of radar guns to detect speeding cars. Over the next few months, every patrol officer will be certified. To further enhance our traffic calming measures, we also distributed approximately 100 "Drive Like Your Child Lives Here" signs to residents on National Night Out in August.

While tensions between police and residents of urban communities continue to escalate nationwide, I am proactively working to support positive and respectful interactions between EOPD and our young people. During my first six months in office, I fought to revitalize the Police Athletic League (P.A.L.), which had been defunct since 2005. Through P.A.L., our police officers reach youth through a variety of year-round activities, including mentoring programs, sports and special events. Our police are not just officers in uniforms. They are parents, coaches, mentors, and often times, your neighbors.

Together, we will continue to make the City of East Orange a safe place to live, work and play.

Mayor Lester E. Taylor III